

רִיחִים טוֹחֲנוֹת מִן הַכּוֹר – The mill grinds from a *kor* – Whenever grain is milled, a certain amount is lost. Some of this loss occurs when the millstones themselves, which must be rough enough to grind the grain, fill with pieces of the ground grain. This wastage can be reduced by the proper adjustment of the space between the millstones, but some very fine flour invariably blows away. Since part of this loss is a constant amount, if only a small quantity of grain is ground, the percentage of the loss is higher, i.e., the loss will be higher in proportion to the total amount of grain milled.

עִסָּה אוֹכֶלֶת מִן הַכּוֹר – Dough is diminished from a *kor* – In the preparation of dough, some flour is always spilled or scattered, while a certain amount of dough will stick to the sides of the vessel. In this case too, the percentage of loss is greater when a small amount of flour is mixed.

LANGUAGE

נַקְדִּימוֹן – Nakdimon – Apparently from the Greek **Νικόδημος, Nikodemus**, which means the people's victory.

הֶגְמוֹן – Officer [*hegemon*] – From the Greek **ἡγεμών, hēgemon**, which means a leader, especially a military leader. It came to refer specifically to Roman prefects. In the Talmud, the term means ruler or high official.

PERSONALITIES

נַקְדִּימוֹן בֶּן גּוּרְיוֹן – Nakdimon ben Guryon – Nakdimon ben Guryon is described in several places in the sources as one of the wealthiest residents of Jerusalem at the time of the destruction of the Temple. He is possibly mentioned in the works of Josephus. As stated in the Gemara, his Hebrew name was apparently **בּוּנִי**, while he also had a Greek name, as was customary at the time. This Greek name was expounded on by the Sages as a way of memorializing this incident.

NOTES

שְׁתַּיִם עֶשְׂרֵה עֵינֹת מַיִם – Twelve wells – Some commentaries write that Nakdimon asked specifically for twelve wells of water, in the hope that the merits of the twelve tribes would help him to repay the loan. If their merits proved insufficient, perhaps the twelve talents of silver would atone for their transgressions (Maharsha).

שָׁנָה שְׂגֹשְׁמִיָּה מְרֻבֵּיין – לְמָה הוּא דוֹמָה? לְעֶבֶד שְׂנֵתָן לוֹ רְבוֹ פְּרֻנְסָתוֹ בְּבַת אַחַת. נִמְצְאוּ רִיחִים טוֹחֲנוֹת מִן הַכּוֹר מֵה שְׂטוֹחֲנוֹת מִן הַקָּב, וְנִמְצְאוּ עִסָּה אוֹכֶלֶת מִן הַכּוֹר בְּמֵה אוֹכֶלֶת מִן הַקָּב.

With regard to a year whose rains are abundant, to what may it be compared? To a servant whose master gave him his portion for a long period of time all at once. He performs all of his milling at one time, and it is therefore found that the mill grinds and produces waste from a *kor*^b of produce in the same amount as it grinds and produces waste from the much smaller *kav* of produce. During each milling process, the same amount of flour goes to waste. Consequently, milling a large amount of flour in a single milling process preserves flour. And similarly, it is found that dough is diminished from a *kor*,^b as it diminishes from a *kav*.

שָׁנָה שְׂגֹשְׁמִיָּה מוּעָטִין – לְמָה הוּא דוֹמָה? לְעֶבֶד שְׂנֵתָן לוֹ רְבוֹ פְּרֻנְסָתוֹ מְעַט מְעַט. נִמְצְאוּ רִיחִים טוֹחֲנוֹת מִן הַכּוֹר טוֹחֲנוֹת מִן הַקָּב, וְנִמְצְאוּ עִסָּה בְּמֵה שְׂנֵתָן מִן הַכּוֹר אוֹכֶלֶת מִן הַקָּב.

In contrast, with regard to a year whose rains are scarce, to what may it be compared? To a servant whose master gave him his portion little by little. It is thereby found that the amount that the mill would have ground from a *kor* of produce is that which in practice it grinds and produces from each *kav*. It is likewise found that the dough that would have been diminished from a *kor* is the same amount that is diminished from a *kav*. In sum, one retains less dough when given his sustenance little by little.

דְּבַר אַחֵר: בְּזִמְן שְׂגֹשְׁמִיָּה מְרֻבֵּיין, לְמָה הוּא דוֹמָה? לְאָדָם שֶׁמְגַבֵּל אֶת הַטֵּיט. אִם יֵשׁ לוֹ מַיִם רַבִּים, מַיִם אֵינָן בְּלוּיִן וְהַטֵּיט מְגוֹבֵּל יָפֵה. אִם יֵשׁ לוֹ מַיִם מוּעָטִין, מַיִם כָּלִים וְהַטֵּיט אֵינוֹ מְתַגַּבֵּל יָפֵה.

Alternatively, when its rains are abundant, to what may this year be compared? To a person who kneads clay. If he has a lot of water, his water is not used up and the clay will be well kneaded. If he has only a little water, the water will be used up and the clay will not be well kneaded.

תָּנוּ רַבָּנֵינוּ: פְּעַם אַחַת עָלוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לְרַגֵּל לְיִרוּשָׁלַיִם, וְלֹא הָיָה לָהֶם מַיִם לְשִׁתּוֹת. הֵלֵךְ נַקְדִּימוֹן בֶּן גּוּרְיוֹן אֶצֶל הַגְּמוֹן אַחֵר, אָמַר לוֹ: הַלְיֹמִי שְׂתֵימָה עֶשְׂרֵה מְעֵינֹת מַיִם לְעוֹלֵי רַגְלִים, וְאִנִּי אֶתֵּן לָךְ שְׂתֵימָה עֶשְׂרֵה עֵינֹת מַיִם. וְאִם אֵינִי נֹתֵן לָךְ, הֲרֵינִי נֹתֵן לָךְ שְׂתֵימָה עֶשְׂרֵה כֶּכֶר כֶּסֶף. וְקָבַע לוֹ זְמַן.

S The Sages taught: Once all the Jewish people ascended for the pilgrimage Festival to Jerusalem and there was not enough water for them to drink. Nakdimon¹ ben Guryon,^p one of the wealthy citizens of Jerusalem, went to a certain gentile officer [*hegemon*]¹ and said to him: Lend me twelve wellsⁿ of water for the pilgrims, and I will give back to you twelve wells of water. And if I do not give them to you, I will give you twelve talents of silver. And the officer set him a time limit for returning the water.

בַּיּוֹם שֶׁהִגִּיעַ הַזְּמַן וְלֹא יָרְדוּ גְשָׁמִים, בְּשַׁחְרִית שָׁלַח לוֹ: שִׁגְר לִי אוֹ מַיִם אוֹ מְעוֹת שֵׁשׁ לֵי בִּידְךָ. שָׁלַח לוֹ: עַדְיִין יֵשׁ לִי זְמַן, כָּל הַיּוֹם כּוֹלֵל שְׁלִי הוּא. בְּצַהֲרָיִים שָׁלַח לוֹ: שִׁגְר לִי אוֹ מַיִם אוֹ מְעוֹת שֵׁשׁ לֵי בִּידְךָ. שָׁלַח לוֹ: עַדְיִין יֵשׁ לִי שְׂהוֹת בַּיּוֹם. בְּמַנְחָה שָׁלַח לוֹ: שִׁגְר לִי מַיִם אוֹ מְעוֹת שֵׁשׁ לֵי בִּידְךָ. שָׁלַח לוֹ: עַדְיִין יֵשׁ לִי שְׂהוֹת בַּיּוֹם. לְגַלְגַּל עָלָיו אוֹתוֹ הַגְּמוֹן, אָמַר: כָּל הַשָּׁנָה כּוֹלָה לֹא יָרְדוּ גְשָׁמִים

When the set time arrived and no rain had fallen, in the morning the official sent a message to Nakdimon: Send me either the water or the coins that you owe me. Nakdimon sent a message to him: I still have time, as the entire day is mine. At noontime the official again sent a message to him: Send me either the water or the coins that you owe me. Nakdimon sent a message to him: I still have time left in the day. In the afternoon he sent a message to him: Send me either the water or the coins that you owe me. Nakdimon sent a message to him: I still have time left in the day. That officer ridiculed him, saying: Throughout the entire year rain has not fallen,

Perek III

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וְעַכְשָׁיו יָרְדוּ גְשָׁמִים? נִכְנַס לְבֵית הַמְּרֻחָץ בְּשִׂמְחָה. עַד שֶׁהָאֲדוֹן נִכְנַס בְּשִׂמְחָתוֹ לְבֵית הַמְּרֻחָץ, נַקְדִּימוֹן נִכְנַס לְבֵית הַמְּקַדֵּשׁ בְּשִׂמְחָה עֲצוּבָה. נִתְעַטַּף וְעָמַד בַּתְּפִלָּה.

and now it will rain? He entered the bathhouse in a state of joy, anticipating the large sum of money he was about to receive. As the master entered the bathhouseⁿ in his joy, Nakdimon entered the Temple in a state of sadness. He wrapped himself in his prayer shawl and stood in prayer.

NOTES

נִכְנַס... לְבֵית הַמְּרֻחָץ – The master entered the bathhouse – The Roman official added insult to injury by entering the bathhouse when the Jews who had arrived in Jerusalem for the Festival did

not even have water to drink. In turn, Nakdimon intended to offend the official by demanding payment for the extra rainwater that had been added to his wells (Maharsha).

Because the sun broke through for him – שֶׁנִּקְדְּרָה – חֲמָה בַּעֲבוּרוֹ: According to the standard text of the Gemara, the sun broke through the clouds and shone for Nakdimon's sake. However, according to alternative versions found in certain manuscripts and editions, the sun shone for Nakdimon at an hour when it should already have set. This is also consistent with the next *baraita*, which lists Nakdimon together with Joshua, an indication that the sun did not set for Nakdimon, as in the incident of Joshua. Some commentaries explain that the sun did not set at the appointed time for Nakdimon, but remained in the sky until the clouds dispersed, proving to the Roman official that it was still day and that his claim for payment was invalid (Maharsha).

The sun stood for Moses – עֲמִידַת הַחֲמָה לְמֹשֶׁה – In addition to the allusions mentioned in the Gemara, the Sages elsewhere add that the phrase: “Upon the peoples that are under all the whole heaven” (Deuteronomy 2:25), indicates that this was not merely a local victory but an event that affected the entire world (see II Chronicles 32:31).

אָמַר לְפָנָיו: רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם! גְּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לְפָנֶיךָ שֶׁלֹּא לְכַבוֹדִי עָשִׂיתִי, וְלֹא לְכַבוֹד בֵּית אָבִיא עָשִׂיתִי. אֲלָא לְכַבוֹדְךָ עָשִׂיתִי, שִׂיְהוּ מִים מְצוּיִין לְעוֹלֵי רְגָלִים, מִיָּד נִתְקַשְׂרוּ שָׁמַיִם בַּעֲבָיִם, וַיִּרְדּוּ גְשָׁמִים עַד שֶׁנִּתְמַלְאוּ שְׁתַּיִם עֶשְׂרֵה מְעֻנוֹת מִים וְהוֹתִירוּ.

עַד שֶׁיֵּצֵא אָדוֹן מִבֵּית הַמְּרַחֵץ נִקְדִּימוֹן בֶּן גּוּרְיוֹן יֵצֵא מִבֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ. כְּשֶׁפָּגְעוּ זֶה בְּזֶה, אָמַר לוֹ: הֲתָן לִי דָמַי מִיִּם יוֹתֵר שִׁישׁ לִי בִּידְךָ. אָמַר לוֹ: יוֹדֵעַ אֲנִי שֶׁלֹּא הִרְעִישׁ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת עוֹלָמוֹ אֲלָא בְּשִׁבְלֶיךָ. אֲלָא עֲדִינִי יֵשׁ לִי פִתְחוֹן פֶּה עֲלֶיךָ שְׂאוּצִיא מִמֶּךָ אֶת מְעוֹתַי, שֶׁכָּבַר שְׂקֵעָה חֲמָה, וְגִשְׁמִים בְּרִשְׁוֵתִי יִרְדּוּ.

חִזַּר וּנְכַנֵּס לְבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, נִתְעַטֵּף וְעָמַד בַּתְּפִלָּה, וְאָמַר לְפָנָיו: רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם! הוֹדַע שִׁישׁ לְךָ אֶהוּבִים בְּעוֹלָמְךָ. מִיָּד נִתְפָּזְרוּ הָעַבִּים וּזְרַחַת הַחֲמָה. בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה אָמַר לוֹ הָאָדוֹן: אֵילוֹ לֹא נִקְדְּרָה הַחֲמָה, הִיָּה לִי פִתְחוֹן פֶּה עֲלֶיךָ שְׂאוּצִיא מִמֶּךָ מְעוֹתַי. תֵּנָּא: לֹא נִקְדִּימוֹן שְׁמוֹ, אֲלָא בּוּנִי שְׁמוֹ. וְלָמָּה נִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ נִקְדִּימוֹן? שֶׁנִּקְדְּרָה חֲמָה בַּעֲבוּרוֹ.

תָּנוּ רַבָּנֵינוּ: שֶׁלִּישָׁה נִקְדְּמָה לָהֶם חֲמָה בַּעֲבוּרָן: מֹשֶׁה, וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ, וְנִקְדִּימוֹן בֶּן גּוּרְיוֹן. בְּשֶׁלְמָא נִקְדִּימוֹן בֶּן גּוּרְיוֹן, גְּמָרָא. וְהוֹשֻׁעַ נִמְי קָרָא, דְּכַתִּיב: “וַיִּדְם הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיִּרַח עָמָד” וְגו'. אֲלָא מֹשֶׁה מְנַלָּן?

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: אֲתֵינָא “אֶחָל”, “אֶחָל” כְּתִיב הֵכָא: “אֶחָל תֵּת פְּחָדְךָ”. וְכַתִּיב הָתָם: “אֶחָל גְּדִלְךָ”.

רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר: אֲתֵינָא “תֵּת”, “תֵּת”. כְּתִיב הֵכָא: “אֶחָל תֵּת פְּחָדְךָ”. וְכַתִּיב הָתָם: “בְּיוֹם תֵּת ה' אֶת הָאָמָרִי”.

רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר: אֲתֵינָא מִגּוֹפִיָּה דְקָרָא: “אֶשׂר יִשְׁמְעוּן שְׁמֵעְךָ, וְרָגְזוּ וְחָלוּ מִפְּנֶיךָ”. אֵימַתִּי רָגְזוּ וְחָלוּ מִפְּנֶיךָ? בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁנִּקְדְּמָה לוֹ חֲמָה לְמֹשֶׁה.

He said before God: Master of the Universe, it is revealed and known before You that I did not act for my own honor, nor did I act for the honor of my father's house. Rather, I acted for Your honor, so that there should be water for the Festival pilgrims. Immediately the sky became overcast and rain fell until the twelve cisterns were filled with water, and there was even more water, so that they overflowed.

As the master left the bathhouse, Nakdimon ben Guryon left the Temple. When they met one another, Nakdimon said to him: Give me the money you owe me for the extra water you received. The official said to him: I know that the Holy One, Blessed be He, has shaken His world and caused rain to fall only for you. However, I still maintain a claim against you, by which I can legally take my coins from you, as you did not pay me on the agreed date, for the sun had already set, and therefore the rain fell onto my property.

Nakdimon went back and entered the Temple, wrapped himself in his prayer shawl, and stood in prayer. He said before God: Master of the Universe, let it be known that You have beloved ones in Your world. Immediately, the clouds scattered and the sun shined. At that time, the master said to him: If the sun had not broken through the clouds, I would have had a claim against you, by which I could have taken my coins from you. A Sage taught: Nakdimon was not his real name; rather his name was Buni. And why was he called Nakdimon? Because the sun broke through [*nikdera*] for him.ⁿ

The Sages taught: With regard to three people, the sun broke through and shone at an irregular time for their sake: Moses, Joshua, and Nakdimon ben Guryon. The Gemara asks: Granted, the case of Nakdimon ben Guryon is known by the aforementioned tradition. The case of Joshua too is derived from a verse, as it is written: “And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies” (Joshua 10:13). However, from where do we derive that the sun shined in a supernatural way for Moses?

Rabbi Elazar said: It is derived by verbal analogy between “I will begin” and “I will begin.” Here, with regard to Moses, it is written: “This day I will begin to put the dread of you and the fear of you upon the peoples that are under all the whole heaven” (Deuteronomy 2:25). And there, with regard to Joshua, it is written: “On this day I will begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you” (Joshua 3:7). The repeated use of the phrase “I will begin” indicates that all the miracles performed for Joshua were also performed for Moses.ⁿ

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said: The fact that the sun stood still for Moses is derived by a different verbal analogy, between the terms “put” and “put.” Here, with regard to Moses, it is written: “I will begin to put the dread of you” (Deuteronomy 2:25). And there, with regard to Joshua, is it written: “Then Joshua spoke to the Lord, on the day when the Lord put the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: Sun, stand still upon Gibeon, and you, moon, in the valley of Aijalon” (Joshua 10:12).

Rabbi Yohanan said: This idea is derived from the verse itself, as it says with regard to Moses: “This day I will begin to put the dread of you and the fear of you upon the peoples that are under all the whole heaven, who, when they hear the report of you, shall tremble, and be in anguish due to you” (Deuteronomy 2:25). When did the nations of the world tremble and when were they in anguish due to you? When the sun broke through for Moses.

לְבַרְכָּהּ כְּנָדָה – As a blessing, like a menstruating woman – Despite the fact that this verse is stated in the book of Lamentations, there is nevertheless a hint of a blessing within its curse (Rav Yoshiya Pinto).

דְּלֵא – רִישֵׁי נְהַרֵי מוֹקְמֵי מִינָן... רִישֵׁי נְהַרֵי – As they do not appoint from us... river officials – Some commentaries explain that it was beneficial for the Jews not to be appointed customs officials or police officers, as this would undoubtedly stir up the anger and jealousy of their gentile neighbors (Rabbeinu Gershom). Others add that since they were not assigned such tasks, they had more time to devote to Torah study (Rabbi Elyakim).

LANGUAGE

גְּזִירֵיפְטֵי [geziripatei] – Government officials (from the Aramaic *gauzir*, meaning official, and the Iranian suffix *pati*, meaning lord. This was the title of a Sasanian functionary).

קוּלְמוֹס [kulmos] – Quill (from the Greek *κάλαμος*, *kalamos*, which means reed, as quills were made from reeds).

BACKGROUND

קִנְיָה – Reed – This is possibly the common reed, *Phragmites communis*, or the *Arundo donax*. These are species of perennial grasses with straight stems, 2–4 m in height. Normally these reeds grow in dense clumps along the banks of rivers or other bodies of water. Reeds were used to make fences and coarse mats. They were also manufactured into pens, mainly for writing large letters with ink.

אָרְזָה – Cedar – The cedar tree, *Cedrus*, can grow to an enormous height. However, as it grows on mountainous slopes, it does not strike deep roots. Since most of the winds in Eretz Yisrael are from the west or north, the cedar's roots protect it from winds coming from these directions. Consequently, a storm from the south, which can occur on occasion, might uproot a cedar tree entirely.



Lebanon cedar

HALAKHA

יָבֵהּ קִנְיָה – The reed merited – According to some authorities, a Torah scroll must be written with a reed quill, not a feather quill (Rema, citing Mordekhai). However, others state that the common custom does not follow this ruling (*Shakh*, citing *Levush*). Nowadays, Ashkenazic scribes write with a feather, while their Sephardic counterparts use a reed (*Shulhan Arukh*, *Yoreh De'a* 271:7).

“וְכֵן עִיר שְׂלֵא יֵרְדוּ עָלֶיהָ גְשָׁמִים”
כו'. אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב: וּשְׂתִיבָהּ
לְקַלְלָהּ.

“הֵיטָהּ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לְנָדָה בִּינְיָהֶם.” אָמַר
רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב: לְבַרְכָּהּ. כְּנָדָה – מָה
נָדָה יֵשׁ לָהּ הֵיטֵר, אִף יְרוּשָׁלַיִם יֵשׁ לָהּ
תִּקְנָהּ.

“הֵיטָהּ בְּאֵלְמִנָּה.” אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה:
לְבַרְכָּהּ. בְּאֵלְמִנָּה, וְלֹא אֵלְמִנָּה מִמֶּשֶׁשׁ.
אֵלָּא כְּאִשָּׁה שֶׁהִלְךְ בַּעֲלָהּ לְמִדְיַת הַיָּם,
וְדַעְתָּהּ לְחֹזֵר עָלֶיהָ.

“וְגַם אֲנִי נִתְּתִי אֶתְכֶם נְבוֹיִם וּשְׂפִלִיִם.”
אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה: לְבַרְכָּהּ, דְּלֹא מוֹקְמֵי מִינָן
לְאִישֵׁי נְהַרֵי וְלֹא גְזִירֵיפְטֵי.

“וְהִכָּה ה' אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּאִשׁוֹר יִנּוּד הַקִּנְיָה
בְּמַיִם.” אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב: לְבַרְכָּהּ.
דְּאָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַחֲמֵי רַבִּי אָמַר רַבִּי
יֹהָנָן: מֵאִי דְכִתְיָב: “נִאֲמַנְסֵי פְּעֻעֵי אוֹהֵב
וְנִגְעִתוּרֹת נְשִׁיקוֹת שׁוֹנֵא?” טוֹבָה קִלְלָהּ
שְׁקִיָּלֵל אַחֲרֶיהָ הַשִּׁילּוּנִי אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִתֵּר
מִבְּרָכָה שְׁבָרְכָה בְּלַעַם הַרְשָׁע.

אַחֲרֵיהָ הַשִּׁילּוּנִי קִלְלָן בְּקִנְיָה. אָמַר לָהֶם
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל: “וְהִכָּה ה' אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּאִשׁוֹר
יִנּוּד הַקִּנְיָה.” מָה קִנְיָה זֶה עוֹמֵד בְּמִקּוֹם
מַיִם, וְגִזְעוֹ מִחֲלִיף, וּשְׂרָשׁוֹ מְרֻבֵּינָן,
וְאִפִּילוֹ כָּל הָרוּחוֹת שְׁבָעוּלָם בְּאוֹת
וְנִשְׁבָּתוּ בּוֹ, אִין מְזִיזוֹת אוֹתוֹ מִמְּקוֹמוֹ,
אֵלָּא הוֹלֵךְ וְכָא עֲמָהּ, דְּמַמְוֵי הָרוּחוֹת,
עֲמֵד הַקִּנְיָה בְּמִקּוֹמוֹ.

אֵבֶל בְּלַעַם הַרְשָׁע בִּירְכֵן בְּאָרְזָה, שְׁנֵאמַר:
“כְּאֲרָזִים עָלֵי מַיִם” מָה אָרְזָה זֶה אִינוֹ
עוֹמֵד בְּמִקּוֹם מַיִם, וְאִין גִּזְעוֹ מִחֲלִיף,
וְאִין שְׂרָשׁוֹ מְרֻבֵּינָן, אִפִּילוֹ כָּל הָרוּחוֹת
שְׁבָעוּלָם נִשְׁבָּתוּ בּוֹ, אִין מְזִיזוֹת אוֹתוֹ
מִמְּקוֹמוֹ, בִּין שְׁנִשְׁבָּה בּוֹ רִיחַ דְּרוּמִית,
עוֹקְרָתוֹ וְהוֹפְכָתוֹ עַל פָּנָיו, וְלֹא עוֹד אֵלָּא
שׁוֹכָה קִנְיָה לִיטוּל הֵימְנֵי קוּלְמוֹס לְכַתּוּב
בּוֹ סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה, נְבִיאִים, וּכְתוּבִים.

S The mishna taught: **And likewise**, if there is a particular city upon which it did not rain, while the surrounding area did receive rain, this is considered a divine curse, as it is written: “And I will cause it to rain on one city, but on one city I will not cause it to rain, one portion will be rained upon, and the portion upon which it did not rain shall wither” (Amos 4:7). **Rav Yehuda said that Rav said:** **And both of the cities are faced with a curse**, as one city suffers from drought while the other is afflicted with destructive storms.

This statement reverses the plain meaning of a verse. The Gemara provides other interpretations that Rav Yehuda attributed to Rav, which also run contrary to the simple meaning of a verse. **“Jerusalem among them was a like a menstruating woman”** (Lamentations 1:17). **Rav Yehuda said that Rav said:** Although the simple meaning of this verse is a curse, it can also be understood as a blessing. **Jerusalem was like a menstruating woman:ⁿ Just as a menstruating woman will become permitted to her husband after the conclusion of her days of ritual impurity, so too, Jerusalem will be repaired from its destruction.**

Similarly, with regard to the verse: **“How she has become like a widow”** (Lamentations 1:1), **Rav Yehuda said:** This too is for a blessing. The verse states that Jerusalem is like a widow, but is not an actual widow. Rather, Jerusalem is like a woman whose husband has gone to a country overseas. Without her husband by her side she is likened to a widow, and yet he intends to return to her.

The same manner of explanation is provided for the verse: **“Therefore I have also made you contemptible and base”** (Malachi 2:9). **Rav Yehuda said:** This too can be interpreted as a blessing, as meaning that the nations view us as lowly, but nevertheless, they do not assign us unpleasant jobs. **They do not appoint from us either river officialsⁿ or government officials [geziripatei].¹**

The prophet Ahijah the Shilonite cursed Israel in the following terms: **“For the Lord will smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water”** (1 Kings 14:15). **Rav Yehuda said that Rav said:** This too is for a blessing, as Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that Rabbi Yohanan said: What is the meaning of that which is written: **“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful”** (Proverbs 27:6)? **The curse with which Ahijah the Shilonite cursed the Jewish people is more effective than the blessing with which Balaam the wicked blessed them.**

Rabbi Yohanan elaborates: **Ahijah the Shilonite cursed the Jewish people by comparing them to a reed.^b “For the Lord will smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water.”** Although it seems to be a curse, this verse is actually a blessing. **Just as this reed stands in a place of water, and its shoots replenish themselves when cut, and its roots are numerous for a plant of its size, and even if all the winds in the world come and blow against it, they cannot move it from its place, rather, it sways with them until the winds subside, and the reed still stands in its place, the same applies to the Jewish people. After all the difficulties that they endure, they will ultimately survive and return home.**

However, Balaam the wicked blessed the Jews by comparing them to a cedar,^b as it is stated: **“As cedars beside the waters”** (Numbers 24:6). **Just as this cedar does not stand in a place of water, and its shoots do not replenish themselves, and its roots are not numerous**, Balaam wished that the same should apply to the Jewish people. Furthermore, while it is true that **even if all the winds in the world blow against it they will not move it from its place, once the southern wind blows against it, it uproots the cedar and turns it on its face. And not only that, but the reed merited^h that a quill [kulmos]¹ is taken from it to write with it a Torah scroll, the Prophets, and the Writings.** Evidently, the curse comparing Israel to a reed is better than the blessing likening them to a cedar.

BACKGROUND

Migdal Gedor – מגדל גָדוֹר: The location of Migdal Gedor is unclear. Some contend that it was a small settlement between Hamat Gader and Gader. According to this opinion, the river referred to in the Gemara was apparently the Yarmouk.

Perek III
Daf 20 Amud b

LANGUAGE

Worthless [reika] – ריקה: This term was apparently commonly used at the time, as it is also mentioned in sources outside the Talmud. It is the Aramaic version of the Hebrew reik, meaning empty. It is also used to refer to a person void of decent behavior, a worthless individual, e.g., "And there were gathered vain [reikim] fellows to Jephthah" (Judges 11:3).

NOTES

How ugly is that man – כמה מכוער אותו האיש: Some commentaries explain that Rabbi Elazar was reacting to the boorishness and moral corruption he thought were expressed in the man's face. When the man responded with his wise retort, Rabbi Elazar realized that he had been mistaken and that the man's ugliness was merely physical, and he immediately expressed his regret for having humiliated him (Iyyun Ya'akov).

Dilapidated... ready to fall – רעועות... ראויות ליפול: Apparently, the subsequent incident involving the wall that stood for thirteen years is cited as an example of a shaky wall that is not in danger of imminent collapse but should still be treated as a hazard (see Dikdukei Soferim).

HALAKHA

Collapsing buildings – מפולת: If the walls of the buildings in a certain city begin to collapse, and these walls were sound and were not positioned on a riverbank, the people of that city must fast and sound the alarm (Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 576:4).

תנו רבנן: לעולם יהא אדם רך כקנה ואל יהא קשה כארו. מעשה שבא רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון ממגדל גדור מבית רבו, והיה רכוב על חמור ומטייל על שפת נהר. ושמוח שמחה גדולה, והיתה דעתו גסה עליו מפני שלמד תורה הרבה.

The Sages further taught in praise of the reed: A person should always be soft like a reed, and he should not be stiff like a cedar. An incident occurred in which Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, came from Migdal Gedor, from his rabbi's house, and he was riding on a donkey and strolling on the bank of the river. And he was very happy, and his head was swollen with pride because he had studied much Torah.

נודמן לו אדם אחד שהיה מכוער ביותר. אמר לו: שלום עליך, רבי. ולא החזיר לו. אמר לו: ריקה, כמה מכוער אותו האיש! שמוא כל בני עירך מכוערין כמותך? אמר לו: איני יודע, אלא לך ואמור לאומן שעשאני: כמה מכוער כלי זה שעשית! כיון שידע בעצמו שחטא, ירד מן החמור ונשתטח לפניו, ואמר לו: נענית לך, מחול לי! אמר לו: איני מוחל לך עד שתלך לאומן שעשאני ואמור לו: כמה מכוער כלי זה שעשית!

He happened upon an exceedingly ugly person, who said to him: Greetings to you, my rabbi, but Rabbi Elazar did not return his greeting. Instead, Rabbi Elazar said to him: Worthless [reika] person, how ugly is that man. Are all the people of your city as ugly as you? The man said to him: I do not know, but you should go and say to the Craftsman Who made me: How ugly is the vessel you made. When Rabbi Elazar realized that he had sinned and insulted this man merely on account of his appearance, he descended from his donkey and prostrated himself before him, and he said to the man: I have sinned against you; forgive me. The man said to him: I will not forgive you until you go to the Craftsman Who made me and say: How ugly is the vessel you made.

היה מטייל אחריו עד שהגיע לעירו. יצאו בני עירו לקראתו, והיו אומרים לו: שלום עליך, רבי, רבי, מורי, מורי. אמר להם: למי אתם קורין, רבי, רבי? אמרו לו: לזה שמטייל אחרך. אמר להם: אם זה רבי, אל ירבו כמותו בישראל! אמרו לו: מפני מה? אמר להם: כך וכך עשה לי, אמרו לו: אף על פי כן, מחול לו, שאדם גדול בתורה הוא.

He walked behind the man, trying to appease him, until they reached Rabbi Elazar's city. The people of his city came out to greet him, saying to him: Greetings to you, my rabbi, my rabbi, my master, my master. The man said to them: Who are you calling my rabbi, my rabbi? They said to him: To this man, who is walking behind you. He said to them: If this man is a rabbi, may there not be many like him among the Jewish people. They asked him: For what reason do you say this? He said to them: He did such and such to me. They said to him: Even so, forgive him, as he is a great Torah scholar.

אמר להם: בשבילכם הריני מוחל לו, ובלבד שלא יהא רגיל לעשות כן. מיד נכנס רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון ודרש: לעולם יהא אדם רך כקנה ואל יהא קשה כארו. ולפיכך זכה קנה ליטול הימנה קולמוס לכתוב בו ספר תורה, תפילין, ומזוזות.

He said to them: For your sakes I forgive him, provided that he accepts upon himself not to become accustomed to behave like this. Immediately, Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, entered the study hall and taught: A person should always be soft like a reed and he should not be stiff like a cedar, as one who is proud like a cedar is likely to sin. And therefore, due to its gentle qualities, the reed merited that a quill is taken from it to write with it a Torah scroll, phylacteries, and mezuzot.

"וכן עיר שיש בה דבר או מפולת" כו'. תנו רבנן: מפולת שאמרו בריאות ולא רעועות; שאינן ראויות ליפול, ולא הראויות ליפול.

The mishna taught: And likewise, if a city is afflicted by pestilence or collapsing buildings, that city fasts and sounds the alarm, and all of its surrounding areas fast but they do not sound the alarm. Rabbi Akiva says: They sound the alarm but they do not fast. The Sages taught: These collapsing buildings to which the Sages referred are those of sturdy and not dilapidated walls; they have walls that are not ready to fall, and not those that are ready to fall.

הי ניהו בריאות הי ניהו שאינן ראויות ליפול; הי ניהו רעועות הי ניהו ראויות ליפול! לא, צריכא דנפלו מחמת גובהיהו. אי נמי, דקיימן אגודא דנהרא.

The Gemara expresses puzzlement with regard to the wording of the baraita: What are sound walls; what are walls that are not ready to fall; what are dilapidated walls; what are those that are ready to fall? The elements in each pair of walls are apparently the same, and the baraita is repetitive. The Gemara answers: No, it is necessary to specify that in the case of walls that fell due to their height, i.e., they are sound but also ready to fall, due to their excessive height. Alternatively, the baraita is referring to a case where the walls were positioned on a riverbank, as they are likely to fall despite the fact that they are not dilapidated, as the riverbank itself is unstable.

To what do you attribute your longevity – **בְּמַה הָאֲרָכַת יָמַי** – *Keren Ora* explains at length that one can live a long life only if his soul finds contentment and pleasure in his body. Each of the righteous acts mentioned here assisted Rav Adda bar Ahava to achieve his long life.

By his nickname...by his family name – **הַכִּינְתוּ...חֲנִיכְתוּ** – Rashi and *Tosafot* both explain the distinction between these two terms as follows: A nickname refers to a derogatory epithet applied to a particular person, whereas a family name refers to an insulting moniker applied to an entire family. Others read: My nickname...his nickname, and explain as follows: According to the first version of the story, Rav Adda bar Ahava himself never made up any derogatory nickname, whereas according to the second version, Rav Adda bar Ahava did not even call someone by a nickname used by others (Rabbeinu Hananel; *Arukh*). Yet others write that Rav Adda bar Ahava was careful not to call someone even by a nickname that was not intended to be disparaging (*Shita Mekubbetzet*).

HALAKHA

And I did not think about Torah in filthy alleyways – **וְלֹא הִרְהַרְתִּי בַּמְבֹאוֹת הַמְטֻנְפוֹת**: One may not discuss or even meditate upon sacred matters in a toilet, a bathhouse, or any other dirty place (Rambam *Sefer Ahava*, *Hilkhot Keriat Shema* 3:4).

And I would not call my colleague by his nickname – **וְלֹא קָרָאתִי לְחֲבֵרִי בְּהַכִּינְתוֹ**: It is prohibited to call people by derogatory names with the aim of humiliating them, even if they are accustomed to these names (*Shulhan Arukh*, *Hoshen Mishpat* 228:5).

LANGUAGE

Carriage [*guharka*] – **גִּוְהָרְקָא**: This word apparently derives from the Middle Iranian *juwālāk*, meaning sack or knapsack.

כי ההיא אשיתא רעועה דהואי בנהרדעא, דלא הוה חליף רב ושמואל תותה, אף על גב דקיימא באתרה תליסר שנין. יומא חד איקלע רב אדא בר אהבה להתם. אמר ליה שמואל לרב: גימתי מר, נקיף. אמר ליה: לא צריכנא האידינא, דאיכא רב אדא בר אהבה בהדן דנפיש זכותיה, ולא מסתפינא.

The Gemara relates: This is like that dilapidated wall that was in Neharde'a, under which Rav and Shmuel would not pass, although it stood in place thirteen years. One day Rav Adda bar Ahava happened to come there and walked with them. As they passed the wall, Shmuel said to Rav: Come, Master, let us circumvent this wall, so that we do not stand beneath it. Rav said to him: It is not necessary to do so today, as Rav Adda bar Ahava is with us, whose merit is great, and therefore I am not afraid of its collapse.

רב הונא הוה ליה ההוא חמרא בההוא ביתא רעינא, ובעי לפנוייה. עייליה לרב אדא בר אהבה להתם, משכיה בשמעתא עד דפנייה. בתר דנפק, נפל ביתא. ארגיש רב אדא בר אהבה איקפד.

The Gemara relates another incident. Rav Huna had a certain quantity of wine in a certain dilapidated house and he wanted to move it, but he was afraid that the building would collapse upon his entry. He brought Rav Adda bar Ahava to there, to the ramshackle house, and he dragged out a discussion with him concerning a matter of *halakha* until they had removed all the wine. As soon as they exited, the building collapsed. Rav Adda bar Ahava realized what had happened and became angry.

סבר לה כי הא דאמר רבי ינאי: לעולם אל יעמוד אדם במקום סכנה ויאמר: עושין לי נס, שמא אין עושין לו נס. ואם תימצוי לומר עושין לו נס, מנכין לו מזכיותיו. אמר רב חנן: מאי קרא? דכתיב: "קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל האמת".

The Gemara explains: Rav Adda bar Ahava holds in accordance with this statement, as Rabbi Yannai said: A person should never stand in a place of danger and say: A miracle will be performed for me, and I will escape unharmed, lest a miracle is not performed for him. And if you say that a miracle will be performed for him, they will deduct it from his merits. Rav Hanan said: What is the verse that alludes to this idea? As it is written: "I have become small from all the mercies and all the truth that You have showed Your servant" (Genesis 32:11). In other words, the more benevolence one receives from God, the more his merit is reduced.

מאי הוה עובדיה דרב אדא בר אהבה? כי הא דאתמר: שאלו תלמידיו לרב אדא בר אהבה: במה הארכת ימים? אמר להם: מימי לא הקפדתי בתוך ביתי, ולא צעדתי בפני מי שגדול ממני.

After recounting stories that reflect Rav Adda bar Ahava's great merit, the Gemara asks: What were the exceptional deeds of Rav Adda bar Ahava? The Gemara reports that they are as it is stated: The students of Rabbi Zeira asked him, and some say that the students of Rav Adda bar Ahava asked him: To what do you attribute your longevity?^N He said to them: In all my days I did not become angry with my household, and I never walked before someone greater than myself; rather, I always gave him the honor of walking before me.

ולא הרהרתי במבואות המטונפות, ולא הלכתי ארבע אמות בלא תורה ובלא תפילין, ולא ישנתי בבית המדרש, לא שינת קבע ולא שינת עראי, ולא ששתי בתקלת חברי, ולא קראתי לחברי בהכנתו. ואמרי לה: בחניכותו.

Rav Adda bar Ahava continued: And I did not think about matters of Torah in filthy alleyways;^H and I did not walk four cubits without engaging in Torah and without donning phylacteries; and I would not fall asleep in the study hall, neither a deep sleep nor a brief nap; and I would not rejoice in the mishap of my colleague; and I would not call my colleague by his nickname.^H And some say that he said: I would not call my colleague by his derogatory family name.^N

אמר ליה רבא לרפרם בר פפא: לימא לן מר מהני מילי מעלייתא דהוה עביד רב הונא. אמר ליה: בינקותיה לא דכירנא, בסיבותיה דכירנא: דכל יומא דעיבא הוה מפקין ליה בגוהרקא דדהבא, וסייר לה לכולה מתא. וכל אשיתא דהוה רעינתא הוה סתו לה. אי אפשר למרה, בני לה. ואי לא אפשר, בני לה איהו מדידיה.

§ The Gemara relates another story about the righteous deeds of the Sages involving a dilapidated wall. Rava said to Rafram bar Pappa: Let the Master tell us some of those fine deeds that Rav Huna performed. He said to him: I do not remember what he did in his youth, but the deeds of his old age I remember. As on every cloudy day they would take him out in a golden carriage [*guharka*],^L and he would survey the entire city. And he would command that every unstable wall be torn down, lest it fall in the rain and hurt someone. If its owner was able to build another, Rav Huna would instruct him to rebuild it. And if he was unable to rebuild it, Rav Huna would build it himself with his own money.

NOTES

Human food may not be fed to animals – מאכל אדם אין – מאכילין לבהמה: It has been pointed out, based on numerous sources, that there is no prohibition against feeding animals food fit for human consumption (Ra'avad). Some commentaries explain that although one may indeed feed animals food fit for humans, it is prohibited to go out and buy this food with the intention of using it as animal fodder. Others suggest that one may feed animals with a small amount of food fit for humans, but not with large quantities of this food. Alternatively, there is a difference between food that is clearly intended for humans and food that is fit for humans but is also commonly given to animals, e.g., carobs and gourds. Lastly, a distinction can be drawn between places where animal fodder is available and places where only food fit for human consumption is available (see Meiri and *Mahatzit HaShekel*).

The commentaries ask: If it is not permitted to use food fit for human consumption as animal fodder, as this is disrespectful to the food, how could Rav Huna have thrown the vegetables into the river? Rashi explains that Rav Huna intended that the vegetables should drift downstream and be eaten by whoever found them. Others suggest that this was not a recognizable show of disrespect, as those who saw the vegetables in the river would assume that they were already rotten when discarded (*Petaḥ Einayim*, citing Rosh).

HALAKHA

Human food may not be fed to animals – מאכל אדם אין – מאכילין לבהמה: One may not feed food that is fit for human consumption to animals, as this is a disrespectful use of the food (*Magen Avraham; Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 171:1).

BACKGROUND

A remedy against Shivta – מילתא דשיבתא: Shivta is mentioned in several places in the Gemara as an evil spirit that rests on the hands of one who neglects to wash his hands at the appropriate times (*Yoma* 77b; *Hullin* 107b). In their responsa, the *ge'onim* explain that it is a disease that afflicts young children, causing them to waste away and die.

וכל פניא דמעלי שבתא הוה משדר שלוחא לשוקא, וכל ירקא דהוה פייש להו לגינאי זבין ליה ושדי ליה לנהרא. וליתביה לעניים! זמנן דסמכא דעתיהו, ולא אתו למיזבן. ולשדייה לבהמה! קסבר מאכל אדם אין מאכילין לבהמה.

ולא ליזבניה כלל! נמצאת מכשילן לעתיד לבא.

כי הוה ליה מילתא דאסותא, הוה מלי בוזא מיניה ותלי ליה בסופא דביתא ואמר: כל דבעי, לייתי ולישקול. ואיכא דאמרי: מילתא דשיבתא הוה גמיר, והוה מנח בוזא דמיא ודלי ליה ואמר: כל דצריך, לייתי וליעול, דלא לסתבן.

כי הוה כרך ריפתא, הוה פתח לבייה ואמר: כל מאן דצריך, לייתי וליכול. אמר רבא: כולהו מצניא מקיימנא, לבר מהא דלא מצניא למיעבד.

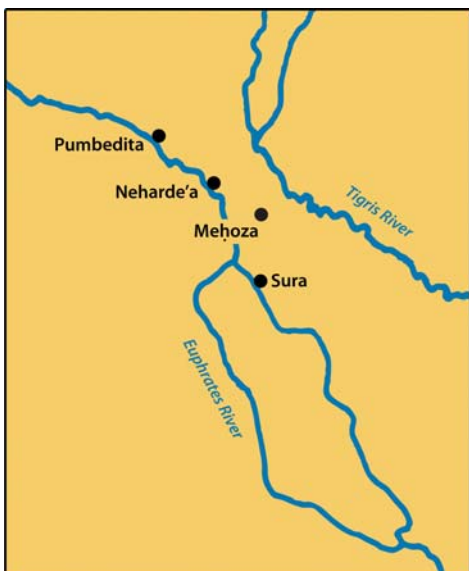
Rafram bar Pappa further relates: **And every Shabbat eve, in the afternoon, Rav Huna would send a messenger to the marketplace, and he would purchase all the vegetables that were left with the gardeners who sold their crops, and throw them into the river.** The Gemara asks: **But why did he throw out the vegetables? Let him give them to the poor.** The Gemara answers: If he did this, the poor would sometimes rely on the fact that Rav Huna would hand out vegetables, and they would not come to purchase any. This would ruin the gardeners' livelihood. The Gemara further asks: **And let him throw them to the animals.** The Gemara answers: **He holds that human food may not be fed to animals,^{NH} as this is a display of contempt for the food.**

The Gemara objects: **But if Rav Huna could not use them in any way, he should not purchase the vegetables at all.** The Gemara answers: If nothing is done, you would have been found to have caused a **stumbling block for them in the future.** If the vegetable sellers see that some of their produce is left unsold, the next week they will not bring enough for Shabbat. Therefore, Rav Huna made sure that the vegetables were all bought, so that the sellers would continue to bring them.

Another custom of Rav Huna was **that when he had a new medicine, he would fill a water jug with the medicine and hang it from the doorpost of his house, saying: All who need, let him come and take from this new medicine. And there are those say: He had a remedy against the demon Shivta^B that he knew by tradition, that one must wash his hands for protection against this evil spirit. And to this end, he would place a water jug and hang it by the door, saying: Anyone who needs, let him come to the house and wash his hands, so that he will not be in danger.**

The Gemara further relates: **When Rav Huna would eat bread, he would open the doors to his house, saying: Whoever needs, let him come in and eat. Rava said: I can fulfill all these customs of Rav Huna, except for this one, which I cannot do,**

Perek III
Daf 21 Amud a



Map of central Babylonia

משום דנפישו בני חילא דמחוזא.

due to the fact that there are many soldiers in the city of Mehoza,^B and if I let them all eat, they will take all the food I own.

BACKGROUND

Meḥoza – מחוזא: A city on the Tigris located near the Malka River, Meḥoza was a large commercial city, and most of its inhabitants were Jews. Unlike most other Jewish communities, Meḥoza's Jews generally earned their living from commerce. Jews from different countries of origin lived in Meḥoza, and many converts lived there as well. After Neharde'a was destroyed in 259 CE, its

yeshiva moved to Meḥoza. Meḥoza became the Torah center of leading scholars such as Rav Naḥman; Rav Sheshet; Rava, who later became head of the yeshiva in Meḥoza; Ameimar; and Rav Kahana, Rav Ashi's teacher. After Abaye's death, c. 338 CE, the yeshiva in Pumbedita, then headed by Rava, also moved to Meḥoza for a period of time.